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LONDON FOR GOLDRICH
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: BARRIERS TO A HAMAS GOVERNMENT, BIAS
AGAINST MUSLIMS, AND BUREAUCRACY AT THE UN

Barriers To A Hamas Government

11. The privately owned Arabic daily newspaper "al-Watan" published a January 17 editorial entitled, "What Comes after Courtesies?":

"As a diplomatic courtesy, during his visit to Ramallah, Spain's foreign minister Miguel Angel Moratinos expressed his respect for Palestinian democracy and candidates' competition. From this we understand that Spain and the European Union do not mind the participation of Hamas in the coming legislative elections...However, the reality is something else. Hamas is still listed as a terrorist group in Europe and the USA. The statements of Moratinos and Dr. Rice during their visits to the Middle East indicate that Europe and the USA both desire to push the peace process forward. Yet they say nothing about Israel's objection to Hamas' participation in the elections. Israel is continuing its violence towards Hamas, arresting the nominees and destroying their campaigns. Israel is putting all possible obstacles in front of the Palestinian people, challenging their freedom to vote, which is expected on January 25."

Bias Against Muslims

12. The government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" published an op-ed piece by Abdullah Al-Ulayan on January 18 entitled, "Giving Fair Consideration to the Other Side":

"Dr. Radwan recently published a book in Beirut, stating that there is a general wave of animosity against Islam in the West, evidenced by the controversy over an American university's attempt to assign a Michael Sells' book on the Quran to freshmen. Parents refused to expose their children to what they called the "dangers of Islam"...Islamic history proved that it could tolerate any religion in lands that it conquered...on the contrary, if we look back to the history of Europe, such as Islam's existence in Spain, we can find that the bloodiest wars took place to purify and abolish Islam and Muslims. Muslims were given a choice to leave, convert, or die...The bias of some Westerners against Islam is a narrow-mindedness that should end. They should reconsider the way they judge Muslims."

Bloated UN Bureaucracy

13. "Oman" published a January 22 editorial entitled "Reforming the UN, a Fundamental Step":

"The UN reform project is considered one of the fundamental steps in regenerating this half-century old organization. The UN, which was established 1945 after the end of World War II, aimed at establishing world peace and security, finding common ground between nations, formulating peace principles and communication between civilizations through UN bodies. With the rapid changes around the world it has become necessary to review the structures of the organization. Developing nations have increased their demands for real reforms, especially in the area of the Security Council, and a reduction in the bureaucracy that has characterized the UN in the past few years, rendering it ineffective...The UN bureaucracy has led the General Assembly to discuss hundreds of issues each year without achieving any real solutions. The call for reforming the UN is right and must be put into action so we will have an organization that serves all. The world needs to establish rules of legitimate solutions without resorting to force. Preventative wars brought destruction to Iraq and Afghanistan, for example. The UN must have the final word in resolving all international disputes, away from the individual interests of countries. Reforming the UN and its organizations is the only way it can play that role."

BALTIMORE